



STEVEN M. FULOP  
MAYOR OF JERSEY CITY

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**\*\*\* Press Release \*\*\***

## ***Mayor Fulop and City Council Ask Voters for Opportunity to Fix Jersey City Public Schools with Change to Appointed Board***

*JC Board of Education has become a National Embarrassment with 5 Board Member Resignations, 1 Board Member Indicted, 1 Board Member standing by Blatant Anti-Semitic Comments, and a Historic Budget Gap*

**JERSEY CITY – Mayor Steven M. Fulop** and the **City Council of Jersey City** will vote on a resolution on the next council agenda that would give voters the right to decide if they want the members of the Jersey City Board of Education to continue to be elected, or if they should be appointed by the Mayor and City Council.

“There is no question that the Jersey City school system has been in chaos. We are asking the voters to hold myself and the City Council directly responsible for the schools, but also in fairness, to give us the tools to make decisions that will fix the schools,” said **Mayor Fulop**. “Today, we are blamed for the schools but we don’t have the ability to make any changes as that only rests with the Board of Education. If given the chance, we will restore the schools so that our public school system will work better for students, parents, teachers, and taxpayers.”

Per New Jersey law, the governing body can submit a question to the voters in the next general election that would allow the board to convert to an appointed board, similar to other large cities. Amid systemic issues in the schools – poor education quality, fiscal mismanagement, special interest groups becoming increasingly involved in campaigns, and the focus taken away from students - City Hall is asking to be held directly responsible and authorized to address matters within the schools and budgets. The 9-member board has recently been plagued with dysfunction resulting in five resignations, one indictment, and anti-Semitic comments by a member.

“If given the chance to be held accountable and make the tough decisions, we will fix the schools. We currently have limited ability to actually impact policies - whether it’s the facilities, afterschool programs, shared services, or budget issues - we have struggled to get any forward movement. We can change the course to refocus priorities back on education, and we feel the parents and public should decide.” Fulop concluded.

The resolution would put the question on the November 2020 ballot to ask voters if they want an elected or appointed Board of Education. All appointments would receive the consent of the City Council.

“The future of every child in our City is at stake if we don’t solve the funding crises facing the Jersey City Public Schools together,” said **Councilman At Large Rolando Lavarro**. “An appointed Board of Education - with the advice and consent of the City Council - makes it crystal clear that the City and Schools have a shared responsibility to confront and address this problem head on, and to align our priorities and resources so we can provide equitable educational opportunities for every Jersey City student.”

The nine members of the Board represent nearly 30,000 students throughout 42 Jersey City Public Schools, ranging from early childhood to 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

“If we don’t enact change now we are dooming ourselves to continue down this path of failure which has led to a 30-year State takeover, special interests influencing our education system, and other unethical practices that have led to failing schools,” said **Ward D Councilman Michael Yun**. “The Board was traditionally appointed until the State came in, and we will have to carefully consider how we can learn from the past to provide the highest quality education for our children and prepare them for a future in the workforce.”

“While the City has had no jurisdiction over the board for years, it is the Mayor and City Council who have received questions and concerns regarding the school board’s budget,” said **Council President Joyce Watterman**. “We believe the residents of Jersey City should have an opportunity to decide whether or not it continues to remain separate.”

**All media inquiries should be directed to Kimberly Scalcione at [kscalcione@jcnj.org](mailto:kscalcione@jcnj.org) or 201-376-0699.**